(b) if so, whether Government would agree to provide a direct rail link between Kolkata and Balurghat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) At present, direct rail connectivity of through coach service of 5 coaches (3-second class sleeper, 1-General second class and 1-General second cum luggage coach) by 3153/3154 Sealdah-Malda Town Gour Express and 621/622 Malda Town-Balurghat passenger are available between Balurghat and Sealdah.

(b) The matter is under examination to introduce direct train service between Balurghat and Kolkata.

Stoppage of express trains at Thana Bhawan railway station

†620. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of express trains passing through Thana Bhawan railway station in district Muzaffarnagar, U.P. everyday;

(b) whether the express trains do not have stoppage on this station;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether Government would issue necessary guidelines to ensure stoppage of express trains at Thana Bhawan railway station with a view to remove difficulty of passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) 4545/4546 Delhi-Saharanpur Express is the only Express train on Delhi-Shamli-Saharanpur section. The stoppage at Thana Bhawan has not been found commercially justified. At present, there is no proposal to provide stoppage.

Crossing on National Highways

†621. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is number of railway crossings on National Highways in Uttar Pradesh, district-wise;

(b) whether his Ministry has prepared any plan to construct under/over bridges on the over-crowded railway crossings;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) what would be the share of State Government in the cost of construction of these bridges;

(e) whether the process of surveys for construction of these bridges has been completed; and

(f) if so, by when the construction work of these bridges is likely to be commenced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The data of level crossings (LCs) is not maintained State-wise or District-wise instead it is maintained Railway Zone-wise. However there are 78 LCs on National Highways passing through Uttar Pradesh State.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) Plan exists for construction of Road over/under bridges (ROB/RUB). Level Crossings with traffic density of one lakh or more Traffic Vehicle Units (TVUs) (TVU-A unit obtained by multiplying the number of trains with the number of road vehicles passing over the level crossing in 24 hours) are considered for replacement by ROB/RUB on cost sharing basis, or on deposit terms where TVUs are less than 1 lakh. Proposals in both conditions have to be sponsored by State Government duly agreeing to fulfil certain preliminary pre-requisites. In addition, Private Enterpreneurs are also econouraged to build ROB/RUB on Built, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis with their own resources in lieu of which they are offered to use the space underneath commercially or collect toll from traffic passing over the bridge for a specified period. At present, out of 78 LCs, at 28 locations works have been sanctioned and for remaining 50 LCs proposals are awaited from State Government Also, National Highways Authority (NHAI) have undertaken to construct over/under bridges on 4 lane national Highways crossing the Railway alignment at existing level crossing locations or at new bye pass locations.

(d) For works sactioned on cost sharing basis, State Governments have to bear 50% cost of the work on deposit terms, the entire cost of the work is borne by State Government/ NHAI, as applicable.

(e) It is an on-going process, as and when firm proposals are received for cost sharing proposals, joint field inspections are carried out by State Government and Railway Officials to determine the alignment location, etc.

(f) Work is in various stages of planning and progress at 28 locations where these have been sanctioned. In addition, there are 39 locations in Uttar Pradesh where NHAI is carrying out works as part of widening of ROBs, providing ROBs at new bye pass locations for National Highway.

Lease of iron ore mines

622. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the owner of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, has been applying for lease of iron ore mines for its captive use for several years;

(b) if so, the steps have been taken to ensure such a captive iron ore mining right to RINL; and

(c) whether his Ministry has recommended leasing of such mines to RINL to the Governments of different States where iron ore reserves are located, like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd., has applied for lease of iron ore mines in the States of Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. The applications made by RINL have been recommended by the Ministry of Steel to State Governments like Andhra Pradesh and to the Ministry of Mines.

Set up of three greenfield pellet plants

623. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether country's largest steel producer the Steel Authority of India Limited plans to set up three greenfield pellet plants with a total capacity of six million tonne and is likely to invest a sum of Rs. 1,000 crores for these projects;